

Making Inferences

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

making inferences: the process of making logical guesses based on evidence and one's own personal knowledge and experience

making inferences from a text: the process of making logical guesses based on clues in a text and one's own personal knowledge and experience.

HERE'S HOW

Step 1: Identify what is known. Ask, "What is the evidence?"

Step 2: Identify similar past experiences. Ask, "What has happened in other instances like this one? When have I come across this before?"

Step 3: Connect past experience to what is known. Think about how aspects of past experience apply to the current situation. Ask, "How are these situations linked?"

Step 4: Evaluate similarities. Ask yourself, "Are these situations close enough to justify an inference?"

Step 5: Make an inference. If the answer is yes, make an inference, using both the current situation and your past experience.

EXAMPLE: INFERENCE

What Is Known

The teacher is scowling, raising her eyebrows and shaking her head.

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Past Experience / Knowledge

The teacher and others have done this in the past when my work was disappointing.

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My Inference

My test score is not a very good one.